

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-29. (Canceled)

30. (New) A supporting installation for supporting a number of turns, extending helically one upon the other in a stack, of an at least partly self-supporting conveyor belt, comprising:

at least one bearing element for supporting the conveyor belt;

a section for supporting the bearing element, said section being extended in an endless loop along which the bearing element is movable; and

wherein the at least one bearing element is a roller bearing element comprising a plurality of first and second rollers.

31. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the first roller has an axis which is oriented in a first direction parallel with a plane made up by two mutually orthogonal axes which are perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the section.

32. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the second roller has an axis which is oriented in a second direction parallel with a plane made up by two mutually orthogonal axes which are perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the section.

33. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the first roller is adapted to receive vertical forces.

34. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the second roller is adapted to receive radially directed forces.

35. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the first roller has an axis which is oriented in the transverse direction of the section.

36. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the second roller has an axis which is oriented perpendicular both to the axis of the first roller and to the longitudinal direction of the section.

37. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the first and the second rollers are alternately arranged in the longitudinal direction of the bearing element.

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38. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the rollers are spaced from each other.

39. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein neighbouring rollers are interconnected to form a bearing element which is continuously extended in its longitudinal direction.

40. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 39, wherein the interconnected rollers form an endless bearing element.

41. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the diameter of the one of the first and second rollers is greater than the width of the other of the first and second rollers.

42. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the geometric center of the one of the first and second rollers is arranged essentially along the rotational axis of the other of the first and second rollers, as seen perpendicular to a plane made up of two mutually orthogonal axes which are perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the bearing element.

43. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the rollers of the bearing element are relatively movable in the longitudinal direction of the section.

44. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 43, wherein said rollers are relatively movable under spring action.

45. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, comprising at least one drive assembly which is drivable by a motor and adapted to drive the belt.

46. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 45, wherein the drive assembly is a chain.

47. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30:
further comprising a carrier which is extended along said section and adapted to support the belt; and
wherein said bearing element is arranged between said carrier and said section.

48. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 46, wherein the carrier is formed by drive assembly which is drivable by a motor and adapted to drive the conveyor belt.

49. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 47, wherein the carrier is a chain.

50. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30:
comprising two chains each extended along the section and adapted to drive and support the belt at a longitudinal side edge of each of the belts; and
wherein the bearing element is in the form of a roller bearing element and is arranged between the associated chain and section.

51. (New) A supporting installation as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the section comprises a bearing seat extended along the section and being L-shaped in cross section and adapted to receive said bearing element.

52. (New) A bearing element for a supporting installation, comprising:
a plurality of first rollers and a plurality of second rollers;
said first and second rollers being alternately arranged in succession to form an elongate bearing element;
the rotational axes of the first and second rollers being mutually orthogonal and also perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the bearing element; and
two neighboring rollers being interconnected by a connecting element, said connecting element holding the neighbouring rollers spaced apart from each other while allowing relative mobility between the rollers in the longitudinal direction of the bearing element.

53. (New) A bearing element as claimed in Claim 52, wherein said relative mobility is provided by elongate holes formed in the respective connecting elements and extending in the longitudinal direction of the bearing element and encompassing a web of one of two neighboring rollers.

54. (New) A bearing element as claimed in Claim 52, wherein each connecting element is arranged so as to allow mutual resilience of the rollers.

55. (New) A bearing element as claimed in Claim 52, wherein the diameter of one of the first and second rollers is greater than the width of the other of the first and second rollers.

56. (New) A bearing element as claimed in Claim 52, wherein each roller comprises a web.

57. (New) A bearing element as claimed in Claim 52, wherein said connecting element comprises a generally U-shaped piece with a hole formed in each leg of the U-shaped piece, which holes are aligned with each other, the web of the U-shaped piece grasping a web of one of the first and the second rollers and said holes receiving a web of the other of the first and the second rollers.

58. (New) A bearing element as claimed in Claim 57, wherein a resilient lip is arranged on the edge of the hole in one of the legs of the U-shaped piece, said lip being extended towards the hole in the other of the legs of the U-shaped piece.